The following ordinance is a template to be used by any municipality that wants to reclaim control of its local food exchanges. There is more to it than just inserting your name in the blank, however: You must gather your people and make the ordinance reflective of what you are trying to protect in your community. Our communities aimed to protect a right to foods of our own choosing and our traditional foodways. Local farmers and small-scale food producers had to decide what they needed to be viable, and customers had to decide what relationship they wanted with farmers and their food. Writing your ordinance will take a great deal of time and effort, but will pay off in making it easier to organize your locality toward passage. Check out the Local Food RULES web site for more info at www.localfoodrules.org. Feel welcome to contact Heather Rethberg (phabc@localnet.com) or Bonnie Preston (bonniepreston@earthlink.net). We can arrange a conference call with a group of you. Proceed knowing that you will not be alone in this work; you will be part of a national food freedom movement and a global movement for food sovereignty.

Local Food And Community Self-Governance Ordinance Of 2014 (LFCSGO)

Section 1. Name. This Ordinance shall be known and may be cited as the “Local Food and Community Self-Governance Ordinance.”

Section 2. Definitions. As used in this ordinance:
(a) “Patron” means an individual who is the last person to purchase any product or preparation directly from a processor or producer and who does not resell the product or preparation.
(b) “Home consumption” means consumed within a private home.
(c) “Local Foods” means any food or food product that is grown, produced, or processed by individuals who sell directly to their patrons through farm-based sales or buying clubs, at farmers markets, roadside stands, fundraisers or at community social events.
(d) “Processor” means any individual who processes or prepares products of the soil or animals for food or drink.
(e) “Producer” means any farmer or gardener who grows any plant or animal for food or drink.
(f) “Community social event” means an event where people gather as part of a community for the benefit of those gathering, or for the community, including but not limited to a church or religious social, school event, potluck, neighborhood gathering, library meeting, traveling food sale, fundraiser, craft fair, farmers market and other public events.

Section 3. Preamble and Purpose. We the People of the Town of (name of town), (name of county), Maine have the right to produce, process, sell, purchase and consume local foods thus promoting self-reliance, the preservation of family farms, and local food traditions. We recognize that family farms, sustainable agricultural practices, and food processing by individuals, families and non-corporate entities offers stability to our rural way of life by enhancing the economic, environmental and social wealth of our community. As such, our right to a local food system requires us to assert our inherent right to self-government. We recognize the authority to protect that right as belonging to the Town of (name of town).

Democratic Wisdom

“When, in some obscure country town, the farmers come together to a special town meeting, to express their opinion on some subject which is vexing the land, that, I think, is the true Congress, and the most respectable one that is ever assembled in the United States.” — Henry David Thoreau